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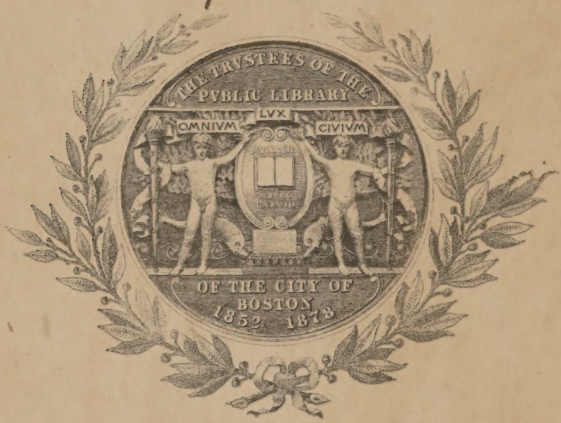
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A

SERMON

DELIVERED IN MARLBOROUGH.

AT THE

ORDINATION

7551.426

OF THE

REV. SYLVESTER F. BUCKLIN

NOVEMBER 2, 1808.

BY PITT CLARK, A.M.
MINISTER OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN NORTON.

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ORDINATION SERMON.

LUKE ii. 49.

WIST YE NOT, THAT I MUST BE ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS?

..... YES, blessed JESUS. We are persuaded thou hast important business to transact in this world, and we approve of thine entering upon it at an early period. This might have been the reply of his parents.

The circumstance, which gave birth to the question, arose from their inadvertently leaving this Holy Child in Jerusalem after they had celebrated the passover. As *they* returned, *he* tarried behind to share longer in the entertainments of religion, and to make farther inquiries in the temple. After three days' diligent search, they found him still in the temple, sitting in the midst of the learned teachers of the law. Being questioned, why he tarried so long behind, he answered in the language of my text: *Wist ye not*, or know ye not, *that I must be about my Father's business?*—The ques-

tion supposes, he had a particular employment assigned him, and that he knew what his business was.

All beings are designed to move in some sphere. Even inanimate as well as animate bodies are destined for particular purposes. Nothing was made in vain. There is something for all the works of God to perform ; some end for every part of creation to answer.

The sun, moon, and stars are ordained to do their part, and by their station, or motion, to contribute to the good of the great whole. Could we extend our eye to other orbs more noble, or to other worlds more grand and variegated, we should doubtless find, that they have all some business to perform, some part to act in the drama of creation.

The globe on which we live, though but a speck amid the vast bodies of the universe, has a part assigned her. She is not only to roll in her sphere, and to perform the office of attraction and cohesion among neighbouring bodies ; but is designed for a theatre, on which innumerable smaller bodies are destined to act their parts. This earth is full of particles and beings, that are designed for some end.

Among all the grades of this lower world man is ranked the highest. Possessed of the power of volition, together with an intellectual mind, and immortal soul, he is capable of acting a very noble part, and of extending his sphere of action through space and time unbounded. He was, therefore, or-

dained to fill an important station here, and by passing through a state of trial, to receive hereafter an everlasting reward according to his works.

Since mankind have already violated the rules of their station, forfeited the hopes of future glory, and exposed themselves to everlasting destruction, the Son of God, out of the tenderest pity and love, came from heaven to open a door of hope, to atone for their past guilt, to teach them how to behave in future, and to make all necessary provision for their final exaltation. To accomplish this business in a manner consistently with our rational and voluntary exercises, he assumed a body like one of us, which was touched with our feelings, though in sinless perfection, and thereby became a leader of the blind, a teacher of the ignorant, and a living, perfect pattern of every virtue, that forms the soul for heaven. His ardent aspiration to enter upon this glorious work, was manifested when he uttered my text: *Wist ye not, that I must be about my Father's business?* The interrogation plainly imports a specific work. It leads us to contemplate the *business* of *his mediation*, together with the employment of his ministering servants to carry it into effect. This opens a field so vastly capacious, that the mind is lost in the prospect. It leads our eyes back to the beginning of time, and directs them forward to the consummation of all things. It opens the very bosom of heaven to our view, and brings the *fulness of the Godhead bodily* up-

on earth. It presents a theme every way so luminous and boundless, as to swell the mind with unutterable thought.

But without entering into the higher parts, which Christ may have been destined to act in the creation of worlds, *visible* and *invisible*, or in filling thrones and dominions of government throughout the universe, it will be sufficient for our present purpose to view the business of his mission here below, and the consequent work, which falls upon his ministers, and the people under their charge.

The business of Christ, as Ambassador of God on earth, was three-fold; *instruction*, *purification*, and *exaltation*. He was sent to *instruct*, to *purify*, and to *exalt* our depraved natures.

His work of instruction combined a two-fold influence; that of precept and example. By precept he was to unfold his Father's mind and will clearly. By example he was to fulfil his Father's law perfectly. He was commissioned not only to give the best instructions, but to exemplify the whole in his actual life. And as setting us a perfect example was one part of his embassy, he entered upon this at an earlier period, than was suitable for him to appear as a public teacher. He was employed in the temple amidst the doctors of the law, at the age of twelve years, *both hearing them and asking them questions. And all, who heard him, were astonished at his understanding and answers.*

Hereby he has taught young people to be early engaged in the work of religion, to be inquisitive about spiritual and divine things, and to enter the service of GOD as soon as they come to years of discretion.

It was requisite, that CHRIST should grow from infancy to manhood, in order to run before us in our image, and to teach *by action* all ages, young as well as old, how to behave. As this holy child grew in years, *he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.* By the charms of such a youth, so perfectly innocent, meek, wise, virtuous, and holy, every rising generation is sweetly admonished and instructed in the ways of religion.

Being about thirty years old, according to the law, he entered upon his public ministry. In this capacity he filled the office of a prophet, as it was foretold of him by Moses. *A prophet shall the LORD your GOD raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.* In this office he *taught as one having authority.* Those, who heard him, declared from the fullest evidence, *we know, that he is a teacher come from GOD.*

The officers, who were sent to crucify him, acknowledged, *never man spake like this man.*

He made it his business to teach the nature and spirituality of his Father's law, the vileness and deplorable consequences of sin, the only way of par-

don and peace for poor, miserable sinners, the necessity of a true renovation in heart and life, in order to enter the kingdom of GOD, the purity of that worship, which is acceptable in the sight of heaven, and those exercises of faith, love, and hearty obedience, which are the only qualifications for future glory. He taught the best doctrines and precepts, that were ever known, the best rules of morality, that were ever devised for the good of society, or individuals here below, and the best directions for our advancement in that road, which leads unto everlasting life. He gave the most useful instructions respecting the vanity and fleeting enjoyments of time, and enforced the certainty of a future resurrection, the solemnities of a final judgment, and the infinite importance of being prepared for eternity. He exhibited those motives, which are the best calculated to stimulate ingenuous minds, to work upon the feelings of the human heart, to rouse the careless and secure, and to inspire all mankind with an ambition to live with a wise reference to futurity. He brought to view the tender compassion, the long forbearance, and the infinite love of his heavenly Father toward the children of men. He disclosed the riches of his mercy, and the treasures of his grace, that all might be induced to come and partake. He taught the goodness of GOD, as the most powerful motive to lead sinners to repentance. And whom he could not melt, nor move by the charms of love, he en-

deavored to persuade by the terrors of the law. His great aim appeared to be in all his instructions to lead mankind into a godly frame, to mould them into an heavenly temper, or, in a word, to instruct and allure them to glorify GOD, that they might enjoy him forever.

He was laborious and unwearied in giving these instructions both in public and in private, and he added a superior sanction to the whole by the miracles and wonders he performed, in proof of his divine authority.

With all his instructions he mixed holy living. His life was one continued copy of what he taught. He went about doing good. Nothing was too laborious for him to perform, nothing too much for him to suffer, in order to obey his Father's will, and teach mankind by example. In his life and conversation centered all that is sweet and lovely in temper, all that is becoming and amiable in disposition, all that is wise, great and noble in mind, all that is benevolent and compassionate in the sensibilities of the heart, all that is harmless and righteous in conduct, all that is honorable and graceful in deportment, all that is virtuous and dignified in character.

If any wish for a pattern of godliness, they may find it in Christ. He was godly in all his actions. If any wish for lessons of humility, meekness, and condescension, they may look to Christ. He was full of these meek, humble, and condescend-

ing virtues. If any wish for an example of discretion and prudence, they may have it in Christ. He was perfectly discreet and prudent under the severest trials, under the most captious questions. If any wish for a copy of submission and fortitude under the troubles of life, they may learn it in Christ. He drank the bitterest cup, and went through the greatest reproaches and tortures in perfect resignation, patience, and fortitude. If any wish to know how to meet death with boldness, and to go to their graves in peace, they are again directed to Christ. He triumphed over this last enemy, and gained a complete victory over death and the grave. In a word, if any wish to learn the art of spending a useful and honorable life, and of dying a happy and glorious death, let them look to this great exemplar. For he has set a perfect copy in all these respects. By diffusing these instructions of precept and example, he faithfully performed this part of his Father's business. He taught every thing requisite for us to believe and practise in relation to GOD, our neighbor, and ourselves, and by his perfect obedience he fulfilled the demands of a perfect law.

The second part of his business, as an Ambassador of GOD, was that of *purification.* He came to *purify* as well as to *instruct.* The Apostle says, *he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

One important design of his mission was to redeem us from the guilt and condemnation of sin, by offering himself a sacrifice for it, to purify our corrupt natures, *by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the holy spirit*, and thus to prepare for the enjoyment of himself forever, all, who became his people, zealous of good works. In this capacity he is called *the high priest to atone*, or *to expiate*. As writes the Apostle: *He was a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to* God, *to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* Also, *he became the propitiation for our sins, and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

There is a purifying influence in Christ's blood, which is sufficient to *purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living* God. "This blood implies *a character*" of perfect obedience, as it is a proof of voluntary and perfect submission to the will of God. This perfect obedience unto death is the only sacrifice for sin, well pleasing in the sight of heaven. Hence it becomes the only ground of justification, the only foundation for the pardon and happiness of returning sinners. Hence the atonement of Christ is the only channel, through which purification and pardon are conveyed; and for the same reason *there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*

Our blessed Lord, by thus filling the office of an atoning priest, and sacrificing his life to purchase a redemption from sin, performed another part of his Father's business.

A third branch was that of *exaltation.* Christ came, not only to instruct and purify, but to *exalt* the soul above this world, and to display his power of exaltation over sin, death, and the grave. He rose, and taught his followers to rise, above the dominion of sin, above the fear of death, above the horrors of dissolution.

Mankind, by reason of sin, are *subject to vanity,* under *the bondage of corruption,* and naturally prone to seek their happiness in sensual gratifications. One important part of Christ's embassy was to elevate the soul above these sensual enjoyments, to renew the spirit and temper of the mind, to raise the affections from earth to heaven, from the creature to GOD. He came to rescue the soul from this lost and depraved state, by opening the eyes of the blind, and turning them from darkness to light. And he afforded sufficient strength and motive for all *to come unto him* for this spiritual life, declaring *he, that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* He taught, and enabled, all his followers to enter into this renovated frame, to rise superior to the practice of sin, to walk like men possessing rational souls, like the sons of GOD, like heirs of immortal glory.

He gave, in his own example and preaching, the strongest incentives to this mental exaltation. Though he mixed with the world, and ate, and drank, and abode with publicans and sinners, yet *his mind* appeared to be in heaven, and *his heart* raised above every thing, that can tempt, allure, or

terrify in sublunary things. When all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, were offered to his acceptance, he resisted the temptation with disdain ; and when the dregs of poverty and suffering were appointed for his portion, he drank the cup with the same elevation of mind. Not allured by the charms, nor depressed by the frowns of the world, he taught mankind to live superior to them all, and to pass through this life with a mind exalted to heaven.

He also soared above the fear of death, and triumphed over this last enemy by conquering its sting, and rising from the grave. Having shown a superiority to the charms of this life, and burst asunder the bands of death, he was exalted to heaven, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. By this exaltation he completed his embassy here below. By these holy works he glorified his Father on earth, and laid a foundation for his people to enter into his glory in heaven.

Having finished his Father's business in the offices of prophet and priest, he entered upon his kingly throne. But this office of a king he will not complete, till he comes the second time. *For he shall so come in like manner as he was seen going into heaven, with power and great glory.* He will then appear not as a despised prophet, or suffering priest, but as a *triumphant King.* He will be acknowledged *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and he will reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*

In contemplating the business of this heavenly Ambassador, we are naturally led to view the work of his ministers.

Gospel ministers, in imitation of Christ, ought ever to be about their Father's business. They have a specific work to perform, an high and important sphere to fill, a great and glorious embassy to discharge. *As ambassadors for Christ they are to pray sinners in his stead to be reconciled to* GOD.

The business of Christ's ministers has been so much anticipated in what has already been said of his employment, that but little need be added on this head. They are to re-echo his preaching, his doctrines, his precepts, his life, and atoning sacrifice. They are to make it their leading business to explain, amplify, and enforce what he taught, to lead sinners to the purifying influences of his blood, and to make them acquainted with the blessings of exaltation through his purchase. This they are to do in the most engaging and impressive *manner*. When they cannot allure by the charms of Christ's religion, they are affectionately to enforce the terrors of the law. The glory of GOD, in connection with his love, service, and enjoyment, is to be their grand theme. This they are to enforce upon mankind, as the object of their present pilgrimage ; the goal, to which they are to run ; the crown, for which they are to contend ; the harvest, which is to repay their toils. Feeling their own souls, as well as the souls of thousands deeply interested in the theme,

they are to study the eloquence of *the heart* more than the metaphysics of the head.

A qualification to communicate these instructions of Christ supposes a *knowledge* of them; a true knowledge of the holy scriptures, and especially of the gospel in connection with the Old Testament; a knowledge of the times, in which they were written, and of the characters, who wrote; a knowledge of the peculiar customs and habits, which prevailed among the people, to whom they were primarily addressed; a knowledge of the oriental languages and histories, so far at least as is requsite to understand the true meaning of the word. All this supposes, likewise, ability and education adequate to such acquirements, and sufficient to make *workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

It is further requisite, that gospel ministers should be *purified* in order to lead sinners to the purification of Christ. Otherwise they will be corrupt leaders and blind guides. Their hearts are to be purified from the corruptions of sin, their consciences purged from dead works, to serve the living GOD. In a word, they are to be *redeemed from all iniquity, and purified unto Christ a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, that they may be his Ambassadors, furnished in the heart as well as in the head for their Master's business.

To crown the qualifications of Christ's ministers their *souls are to be exalted* through the power of his

exaltation. They are to be exalted above the frowns and flatteries of the world, exalted above the temptations of sin, above the slavish fear of man, or dread of death, and to rise with Christ to the enjoyment of spiritual life and holy obedience.

Thus furnished they may be about their Father's business without fear, preach up the whole counsel of GOD with boldness, and, having turned many to righteousness, *may shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forevermore.*

The business, which falls upon the people, over whom ministers are placed, claims a brief, but particular attention. Or have the people at large nothing to do in the work of their own salvation? Are they to be mere spectators of the business performed by Christ and his Ambassadors for their happiness? Are they to expect this salvation to work upon them in a mechanical way, and by *irresistible force* to carry them to heaven? Surely not. A salvation *forced* upon mankind would not make them happy. To *enjoy* a thing it must be an object of free choice. All have something to do in making this choice, and in cultivating a relish for the things, which ought to be chosen. All are required to be about their Father's business, and to pursue it till it becomes their supreme felicity. The account, all must hereafter give, *how* they hear, and receive, and improve, plainly supposes, they are to be active and diligent in the work of their own salvation. Every one, also, has some sphere to fill,

some important duties to discharge, some exertions to make in order to fly from sin, to cultivate holiness in the fear of GOD, and to serve him in some useful station.

If it be the business of preachers to deal out the instructions of Christ, it is the business of hearers *to learn* these instructions, and carry them into practice. If it be the business of Christ to purify and exalt, and of his ministers to proclaim the invitations and lead the way, it is the business of sinners *to come* to Christ, that they may be purified, *to submit* to him, that they may be exalted. If it be the business of the former to sound the alarm and open the fountain of mercy, it is the business of the latter, blind as they may be, *to go to the pool and wash*, to follow the directions, *to do the doctrine*, to ask the divine assistance and blessing, that they may experience the happy effects. If, in short, it be the duty and business of ministers to sow the seeds of knowledge, virtue, and goodness, it is the duty and business of all the people *to attend and receive the incorruptible seed, which is the word of GOD, able to make them wise unto salvation.*

This attention and application of the hearers is requisite not only for *their* good, but to render the work of Christ and his ministers successful. For although these Ambassadors faithfully perform *their* part, and finish the business of their mission, yet the great *end*, the important *design* is not answered, unless the people *hear and obey.*

If an Ambassador be sent to negotiate peace with

a foreign power, and he propose the fairest terms and faithfully discharge the duties of his embassy, yet the *end* of his mission is not answered, if the people, to whom he is sent, refuse to comply with the conditions. In this case he must return without making peace. Likewise the business of GOD's Ambassadors is not successful, nor the important end of their embassy answered, if sinners will not receive the instructions, nor comply with the terms. Christ did all that was reasonable and suitable to be done to save sinners, and thereby glorified himself. His ministers, if they faithfully discharge the duties of their office, will be *glorious in the eyes of the Lord, though Israel be not gathered*, though the stubbornness of the wicked frustrate the design of their preaching, and render it abortive.

Therefore it is incumbent on all, who are favored with the preaching of the gospel, to *observe* and *follow* the directions given, so far as they are agreeable to the words of Christ, to inquire in his temple, to *wait at the posts of his doors*, and to *work out their own salvation with fear and trembling*, under the animating assurance, GOD is *ready to work in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.*

The business of a people, with respect to their minister, is, *to see that he may be with them without fear, to know and honor* him in his office, and *esteem him highly in love for his work's sake*, to afford him an adequate support, that he may give himself wholly to the work of the ministry, to strengthen and encourage his heart by attention to his preach-

ing, and by adding the weight of their influence and example to the truths, he may deliver, to spread the mantle of charity over his foibles and infirmities, and *to strive for those things, which make for peace, and whereby one may edify another.*

A people thus co-operating with the labors of a gospel minister, and *provoking each other to love and good works*, presents one of the most beautiful pictures, that this world can exhibit. It gives a pleasing foretaste of that heavenly society, where all are made perfect in love, knowledge, and purity, and where innumerable companies of the blessed will be blended together in complete harmony and blissful exaltation.

DEAR SIR,

You are destined to take a leading part in this pleasing and glorious work. You are now to be consecrated to the work of the ministry in this place. The sphere, in which you are to move, is high and important, and your responsibility will be great. A minister of the gospel is an Ambassador for GOD in Christ's stead. In imitation of him may you be about your *Father's business.* May your heart glow with that work, which Christ came from heaven to commit to his ministers. *His* instructions you are to receive and explain to your hearers. *His* purifying influence you are to *feel* and exhibit as the fountain of cleansing for others. His exaltation is ever to rest on your heart, and the blessings of it flow from your tongue as motives for all to serve GOD in their stations. You are to catch the

fire of his religion, and therewith to enlighten and warm the hearts of your hearers.

Let me intreat you to make the bible your rule, the gospel your creed, the love of Christ your theme, the throne of grace your refuge, the salvation of souls your greatest concern, and the service of GOD your only business. Call no man *Master on earth. One is your Master, even Christ.* Let him be your spiritual leader in all things, and like him instruct both by precept and example. Let the eye of wisdom, the tongue of kindness, and image of holiness mark your ministerial course. And by faithfully serving your divine Master, may you long enjoy the happy fruits of your labor here, and be admitted hereafter to the everlasting rewards of the blessed.

The church and society in this place will listen to a few words on the present occasion.

You, my friends, are deeply interested in the transactions of this day. Behold the man, who is about to be set over you in the Lord. He is the minister of your choice, and it is a pleasing circumstance, that you are so well united in so good a man. I trust he will be faithful in your service.

But think not, that his preaching, however faithful and evangelical, will instruct, purify, and save you without your attention and co-operation. That you may receive benefit from the word, you must *attend* thereunto, receive it with meekness, and reduce it to practice. Food will not nourish unless it be *received* and *digested.* Even heavenly

manna, showered upon you ever so plentifully, would do you no good, unless you gave it a reception. An empty cask can never be filled by pouring on the outside. There must be a free reception and close retention.

You are *active* recipients; vessels of honor, possessing eyes, and ears, and hearts, which you are required to open, or to put in such a situation, that you may *receive the pure milk of the word, and grow thereby.* You have also powers of volition and understanding, with which you may *digest* and *retain* this spiritual food, and be nourished unto eternal life. You have also the fairest offers of the divine spirit and grace, which are sufficient to furnish you unto every good work. Though you are dependent on GOD for all the gifts of salvation, yet your dependence, instead of relaxing your endeavors, ought to quicken your activity in putting yourselves under the *droppings of the sanctuary*, under the influences of grace; in laying yourselves open for the reception of truth, meditating upon the word, and giving it free course, that it may be glorified by your active and wise improvement.

If any of you *lack wisdom*, or grace, or any good thing, *ask of GOD, who giveth unto all liberally, and upbraideth not.*—Listen not to the idle insinuation, "you *cannot ask*, and you have *no right* to ask till you have received conversion." For you may as well believe, that you have *no right to knock* till you have *entered*, and that you cannot *strive* to enter till you are *admitted.* Rather believe the Lord Jesus

Christ, who is directing you to *ask*, to *seek*, and to *knock*, in *order to find* admittance, to labor for spiritual food, and to give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, by rightly using the gifts and powers already granted.

As you have manifested your active exertions in erecting this elegant temple, and making provision for one to stand, as a burning and shining light in this golden candlestick, may you also be active and diligent in ornamenting this house with *your presence*, in cheering the heart of your minister by love and good works, and in adorning the doctrine of GOD, your Saviour, in all things by an holy walk, and heavenly conversation.

Suffer a few words to this numerous assembly.

You have heard of the business of Christ, the business of his ministers, and the business of those under their care. You are all interested in this work. You live in some station; you move in some sphere. Whatever be your occupation, rank, sex, or age, you are required to be about your Father's business, to serve GOD with an upright heart, and a willing mind. And be assured, this service will ennoble your characters, and be the best ornament of your lives. It will also lead your minds to endless improvement, and your souls to endless enjoyment.

Religion is not a mere *pang*, or *groan*—It is the business of the life, a principle, which rouses to the best thoughts, to the most worthy designs, to the most noble deeds. It is something, which is to run

through all your actions, and give a right direction to all your movements, that you may answer the end of your existence, and acquire everlasting renown.

Believe not that vain philosophy, which would make you think, "every one answers the end of his existence, whether he be virtuous or vicious, whether he *serve* GOD or *Mammon*." For this flatters the wicked with the idea, that they are *always* employed in their Heavenly Father's business, and that GOD is the efficient cause of all their sins.* Do

*In Bower's History of the Popes we find, that the sentiment of GOD's particular agency in the production of sin, and the doctrines of necessary sin and irresistible holiness, are considered Manichæism under a new dress. This celebrated historian informs us, 'that Augustine and others, who embraced the above doctrines, when they first crept into the church, were stigmatised as Manichees.'

Another eminent writer says, 'that these principles were first introduced by some christian Manichees; who not being able to vindicate their two eternal, self-existent, and independent principles of good and evil, (which, as they thought, necessarily involved all mankind either in sin and misery, or rendered them virtuous and happy, as they fell under the influence of the one, or the other,) found out a way of reducing their doctrines of necessary sin and necessary holiness to one principle, by assigning this arbitrary determination of men's moral and natural circumstances to the one GOD, which before they assigned to two. He with much propriety considers these doctrines as Manichæism christianized. And says, it is such doctrines as these, which have misrepresented the christian religion, harassed the christian world, by blinding and confounding men's understandings, and embittering their spirits; and which have been the occasion of calling in the help of false learning, metaphysical, school divinity, in order to give a colour of reasoning to the grossest absurdities, and to enable divines to make a plausible show of defending palpable contradictions.'

'It is somewhat singular, that the advocates for this doctrine of GOD's being the author of sin, have blundered upon the same ground

any of you wish to give this encouragement to the workers of iniquity!—to put this plea into the mouths of the most abandoned, even of robbers and murderers, that all their iniquities are the *offspring* of the *divine decree*, that *they* notwithstanding their wickedness, answer the end for which they were made, and bring as much glory to GOD as the most virtuous!—Let me intreat you to spurn from your breasts this strange philosophy. Suffer not yourselves to think, that a pure fountain can send forth impure waters, that the sun, which is constantly emitting rays of light, is at the same time the source of darkness, or that GOD, who is *the giver of every good and perfect gift*, is also the *secret agent* in every kind of wickedness. Believe the scriptures; follow the directions of Christ; yield to the spirit of truth, which hates sin with a perfect hatred, and *was manifested to destroy the works of the devil;* enter the service of your Maker; be about your heavenly Father's business; become fellow-workers with the Lord Jesus Christ, that you be joint-heirs with him to an heavenly inheritance. AMEN.

in justifying it, which supports the favorite doctrine of the modern atheistical philosophers, viz. that the *end* sanctifies the *means*. GOD having an eye to the general good, say they, is justified in leading a certain number into the commission of sin, and then punishing them eternally for it. Modern atheists only carry this principle to its proper extent, by asserting, that rational creatures would be justified in the commission of any crime, if they knew it would be for the general good, and if they were led to it with this view. Indeed they consider that as no crime, as no sin, however contrary to the laws of GOD or man, which is done with an eye to the good of the great whole.'

THE

CHARGE,

BY

REV. MOSES ADAMS,

OF ACTON.

DEAR SIR,

In conformity to apostolick authority and example, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, you are now an ordained minister of the gospel of Christ.

The nature and duties of the office have been, we trust, the subjects of your serious and prayerful study.

They have been stated and recommended by the preacher, in a solemn and affecting manner, to your unremitting attention.

It is my duty, by way of Charge, in the name, and by the order of this council, to reimpress upon your mind the duties of your high vocation; that

you may take heed to the ministry, which you have received in the Lord, to fulfil it.

As you are engaged, not for a day, or a year, but, for life ; God grant that it may be a long and happy life ; you will do well to make early arrangements for regulating your studies and appropriating your time to the various parts of ministerial labours.

In your study you must make the bible the principal subject of your attention ; and from it, you will draw all the doctrines and duties, which you preach to your people ; using commentators only as human aids to your inquiries. And *there* you must seek diligently, by prayer, that light and help, which you will daily need in prosecuting your work.

In this house of God, you will lead your people to him in prayer and praise, and you will declare his will faithfully to them. Here you will administer the ordinances of the gospel to the proper persons ; making a difference between the holy and the unclean. Here you will apply the discipline, which the head and lawgiver of the church hath appointed in his kingdom. And here you will pronounce the divine benediction, in the name of the Lord.

When you ordain others to this work, be satisfied, that they are faithful men, able to teach others also.

Remember that your field of labour is not confined to your study, and to this house of God. You

must do much in private, visiting from house to house, not only to rejoice with them, who rejoice, but to sympathize with them, who are in sorrow.

Your success will depend much upon your supporting the ministerial character in your private walk. Be circumspect, therefore, in all things, at all times and places, that none may find any evil thing to say of you.

Let it be an object with you to live in peace with your people, as you desire their good, or your own comfort.

This church and society have the first claim to your attention, and their love and esteem are of the highest importance to you; but your light must not be confined to this candlestick. You must endeavour to acquire deserved praise in all the churches; and in particular, the approbation and friendship of the churches and ministers in your immediate vicinity. Your personal comfort and usefulness, as well as the edification of your people depend much upon it.

But above all, we charge you to approve yourself to GOD, whose watchful eye will be constantly upon you. Keep in view the time, when you must give an account of your stewardship. On that all interesting day, may you be owned of Christ, as a servant, who hath been faithful in the things, which have been committed to his care.

And may you have, on that occasion, the abundant joy to present to your Master many, very

many souls, saying, This and that man, this and that woman were spiritually born under my ministry. Lord, here am I and the children, whom thou hast thus graciously given me. Amen—and let all the people say, AMEN.

THE

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

PRESENTED BY

REV. EZRA RIPLEY.

THE first duty, the highest glory, and the supreme felicity of man, consist in a moral likeness to GOD, who is love. Hence, love comprises the whole system of practical religion, and "is the fulfilling of the law." Its fruit is pleasant, joyous, and divine. It renders individuals happy, diffuses blessings through society, and qualifies men for heaven. Hence, also, the principal design of the gospel is, to impress this image of the Deity on the minds and hearts of men, in a way consistent with the divine character, our reasonable nature, and lapsed condition.

The most perfect and glorious expression of love, of which we can form an idea, is the mission of Jesus

Christ to be the Saviour of men. "God so loved the world, that he gave his Son!" But, no language can express the degree of this love. The love of Christ was similar. He submitted to death, that we might live. This compassionate Saviour taught his disciples the practice of love, both by precept and example, in degrees of purity and perfection before unknown. His new commandment to his followers is, that "they love one another, as he hath loved them." By this precept we are obligated to exercise towards our brethren such an active and ardent affection, as constantly prompts us to every act of friendship and goodness, which our abilities admit, and their exigencies require. Jesus Christ connected his ministers by a relation, which is expressive both of endearment and equality, and which unceasingly imposes the labours of love and kindness. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." His ministers, in every succeeding age, ought to feel themselves mutually endeared to each other, and strictly on a level in respect to their office. Brethren should love, not in word only, but in deed and in truth; their love should never fail. Of all brethren christian ministers should love one another "with pure hearts fervently." And although on a comparative view of the dispositions and treatment of some ministers towards each other, and the instructions of Christ, we discover reasons for regret and humiliation; yet, impressed by his supreme authority over his church, animated by his illustrious example, and aided by

his all-sufficient grace, we will not cease to admire and cherish this divine virtue, love one to another.

An opportunity now presents for stirring up our minds by way of remembrance, and renewing our fraternal engagements.

I do, therefore, in the name and behalf of the council present, give to you, reverend and dear brother, my right hand. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you;" not in cold formality, nor merely for the sake of ceremony sanctioned by long usage, but in brotherly love and christian communion. By this apostolic rite we acknowledge you to be regularly inducted to the pastoral office in this place. We hail you a brother and fellow labourer in the kingdom and patience of the Redeemer, equal with us in authority and privileges; and we cordially bid you welcome to the vineyard of the Lord. We engage to render those offices of kindness and love, which the sacred relation between us may suggest and demand. We assure you of our satisfaction in your ministerial qualifications and character, and rejoice in hope, that you will be a "burning and shining light." It shall be our endeavour to encourage your heart, and strengthen your hands, in your arduous official services. We hope that your spirits will never be wounded, nor a painful sigh be excited, by the austere countenance, or the cold and uncharitable treatment of your fathers or brethren in the ministry. But should discouragement arise from this quarter,

think it not a new thing under the sun ; nor let it induce distrust in the care of our heavenly Father, nor in the promised grace of our blessed Master. By your candour, meekness, and enlightened zeal, prove to them and to the world, that you have learned of Christ, and merit the approbation of men. We unfeignedly wish you length of days, and sublime joys in the ministry you have received of the Lord ; and may you finally enjoy the infinite blessedness of those, who turn many to righteousness.

Freely have we given you, dear sir, our testimony of approbation and pledge of fraternal love and official kindness. Believing that your heart is, as our heart, I do cheerfully receive your hand in token of a reciprocation of those affectionate feelings and sacerdotal obligations, which have been expressed. You readily join with us in realizing, that the ministers of Christ are brethren by sacred ties, and ought to cultivate and exhibit a spirit of mutual affection, candour, and forbearance.

It is to be lamented, that worldly ambition, jealousy, and envy have sometimes found a place in the hearts of christian ministers. We are men subject to like passions with other men. The disposition and example of our Lord, "who was meek and lowly in heart," are not always before our eyes, or have not their due influence on us. But we ought to realize, that we are under higher obligations, than other men, to suppress every vile passion, and to be pure in heart as well, as clean in

hands. We should be united in affection, harmonious in our endeavours to promote the interests of religion, and able to feel entire confidence and complacency in each other. Our union is for the best of purposes, even the virtue, happiness, and salvation of men. The unbelieving and censorious will in vain charge us with a combination for sinister ends, when the only occasion of complaint is "fervent charity among ourselves." It is far more likely, that coldness and alienation, censures and selfishness among ministers, would prejudice people against the religion they preach, and induce the belief that they had not imbibed the spirit of Christ. We must banish from our breasts every discordant and uncandid disposition, if we would hope, on the principles of the gospel, to enjoy the favourable presence and blessing of God.

In the ceremony exhibited we recognise the faith, order, and communion of the christian society in this place.

Brethren, we cordially participate with you, on this joyous occasion. After years of turmoil and temptation, which we have viewed with deep concern, you have a fair prospect of rest and peace. Let nothing on your part darken this prospect. We congratulate you on the re-settlement of the gospel in so much harmony among yourselves. Blessed may this day prove to you and your pastor.

Brethren, behold the man, and receive him in the Lord. If you religiously desire that he may be

a rich blessing to yourselves and your children, you will constantly attend on his ministry, hear the word in love, and be doers of the work. Be kind and candid towards your pastor, while he affectionately watches for your souls. This will enliven him in your service, and comfort him under the unavoidable difficulties of his office.

"Now we beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together in your prayers to GOD for him; that he may come unto you with joy by the will of GOD, and may with you be refreshed."

Finally, let pastors and churches devoutly observe the animated sentiments of the Psalmist; "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." AMEN.

NOTE.

The Ordaining Council consisted of the Pastors of the following Churches, with their Delegates :...

Church in *Acton*, ... Rev. MOSES ADAMS.
Church in *Concord*, ... Rev. EZRA RIPLEY.
Church in *Framingham*, ... Rev. DAVID KELLOG.
Church in *Norton*, ... Rev. PITT CLARK.
First Church in *Rehoboth*, . . . Rev. JOHN HILL.
Church in *East-Sudbury*, ... Rev. JOEL FOSTER.
Church in *Southborough*, ... Rev. JEROBOAM PARKER.
Church in *Bolton*, ... Rev. ISAAC ALLEN.
Church in *Westborough*, ... Rev. ELIJAH ROCKWOOD.

The *INTRODUCTORY PRAYER* was made by Rev. Mr. HILL; the *SERMON* by Rev. Mr. CLARK; the *ORDAINING PRAYER* by Rev. Mr. KELLOG; the *CHARGE* by Rev. Mr. ADAMS; the *RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP* by Rev. Mr. RIPLEY; and the *CONCLUDING PRAYER* by the Rev. Mr. FOSTER.